

U.S. banks ‘stress test’ attempts to cover crisis

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Ten of the largest U.S. banks must raise \$75 billion over the next few months to meet the government’s definition of being solvent, according to a “stress test” report issued by the federal government May 7. The report is aimed at presenting the banks’ financial conditions in the most favorable light.

The test was conducted for 19 of the biggest banks with at least \$100 billion in assets, considered by the government as “too big to fail.” It projects a “worst case scenario” of the banks losing \$599 billion through the end of 2010, or 9.1 percent of their total loans, which would be the highest rate of loss since 1921. The report assumes a 10.3 percent official unemployment rate next year, the economy contracting 3.3 percent, and a 22 percent decline in housing prices.

Economic conditions, however, may get considerably worse. Unemployment is already at almost 9 percent and the economy has contracted over the past six months by more than 6 percent.

The report mandates Bank of America to raise \$33.9 billion; Wells Fargo, \$13.7 billion; and the auto finance unit GMAC, \$11.5 billion. Plans for raising

Continued on page 9

Toilers bear brunt of Pakistani offensive

BY DOUG NELSON

The Pakistani military has launched a large-scale offensive against Taliban forces based in the country’s northwest Swat Valley, swelling the ranks of internal refugees from the region to more than 1 million.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani announced May 7 that regular army units would be deployed to join paramilitary forces in an escalation of operations that began April 26.

Pakistan’s major political parties, with the exception of the Jamaat-e-Islami, backed the offensive.

The day of Gilani’s announcement, U.S. president Barack Obama said the United States would send \$400 million in emergency economic aid to Pakistan. Washington has also budgeted \$700 million to train and equip Pakistan’s military in the next fiscal year, beginning September 30, up from the current \$400 million.

Pakistani military spokesman Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas said between 12,000 and 15,000 army troops were taking part in the operation against an estimated 4,000 Taliban fighters.

The Pakistani capitalist rulers have stationed the great majority of the country’s 550,000-strong regular army in the eastern provinces and Kashmir, facing

Continued on page 7

Afghans protest war, bombings of villages

U.S. warplanes kill more than 100 civilians



AFP/Getty Images/Massoud Hossaini

Some 1,000 University of Kabul students march in Afghan capital May 10 following recent U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan, which killed more than 100 civilians. Signs in Dari denounce “America and its allies,” protest the bombing raid, and call for “murderers to be tried.”

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Upwards of 1,000 university students in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, marched May 10 to protest U.S. missile strikes in two villages that killed more than 100 people, most of them civilians. Carrying a banner that said “USA is the biggest terrorist around the world,” the students called for the prosecution of the U.S. troops responsible.

The Afghan news Web site Quqnoos, based in Kabul, reported that student leaders read out a statement that said, “Our people are fed up with Taliban beheadings and suicide bomb-

ings. On the other hand, the massacre of civilians by the American forces is a crime that our people will never forget.”

Referring to U.S. officials’ claim to regret the civilian deaths, the statement said, “You cannot wash away the blood of Bala Buluk martyrs with bizarre words of excuse and sorrow.”

The missile strikes occurred in the Bala Buluk district of Farah Province in western Afghanistan May 4. Hundreds in the province took to the streets May 7 in angry protests. Haji Nangyalai told the Pakistani daily

Continued on page 9

Int’l day of action to demand: Stop execution of Troy Davis!

BY BEN JOYCE
AND CHERYL GOERTZ

Supporters of Troy Davis, a frame-up victim on death row, are stepping up a campaign to halt his execution and win his release. An international day of action with rallies, demonstra-

tions, petition drives, cultural events, and other activities is being organized May 19 to spread the word about his case, now pending action by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Davis was arrested in 1989 and convicted in 1991 for the killing of a white police officer in Savannah, Georgia. At the time, he was 20 years old.

Davis maintains that he is innocent. The prosecution’s argument rests solely on witness testimony as no physical evidence has been presented. Nine people claimed they were witness to the 1989 murder and implicated Davis at the time of the trial. However, seven of the nine have since recanted or contradicted their statements and several have signed affidavits stating that they were pressured or coerced by police to testify against Davis.

On October 24, three days before Davis was scheduled to be executed, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals granted Davis a stay of execution to consider a new appeal. On April 16

Continued on page 3

‘Militant’ drive wins 2,129 new subscribers

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Supporters of the *Militant* capped off a largely successful spring campaign selling 2,129 subscriptions to the revolutionary press. All but two areas in the United States and all areas in other countries listed on the scoreboard either met or surpassed their adopted quotas.

Militant supporters fell short of meeting the international goal by only 21 subscriptions, finishing at 99 percent.

Throughout the drive *Militant* vol-

Continued on page 4

U.S. troops to patrol cities in Iraq past ‘pullout deadline’

BY SETH GALINSKY

At a Pentagon news conference May 8, Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, announced that as many as 20 percent of U.S. troops will remain on patrol in some Iraqi cities beyond the June 30 deadline for withdrawing outside city limits.

Odierno also said that there are now 134,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, more than before the start of the so-called surge in 2007, and double the number currently in Afghanistan.

Even the figure of 20 percent is questionable as Camp Victory, with 20,000 U.S. troops and much of the base inside Baghdad city limits, has been classified as outside the city. The base is a 15-minute drive from downtown Baghdad.

“It changes every day,” Odierno said, when pushed to give an exact figure for how many U.S. troops are operating inside major cities. “I could give you a number today; it will be

different tomorrow, it will be different the next day. Okay?”

U.S. president Barack Obama has promised that he will withdraw all but a garrison force of 50,000 U.S. troops from Iraq by August 2010.

Odierno said that in the last three weeks, U.S. troops have arrested 200 Iraqis to undermine groups that have

Continued on page 4

Also Inside:

Boston socialists petition to win ballot status in fall	2
NATO troops join war exercises in Georgia	2
Miami: court convicts five in “terrorist” frame-up case	5
Tamils in Canada protest Sri Lanka war drive	5

Boston socialists petition to win ballot status in fall

BY KEVIN DWIRE

BOSTON—“You got me. I’ve worked 37 years and now I’m unemployed,” explained a woman to Laura Garza as she signed a petition to place Garza’s name as the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Boston City Council in District 1 on the ballot in the fall election.

As campaign supporters collected signatures they passed out flyers inviting people to hear Garza and William Leonard, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Boston mayor, speak at a program entitled “Socialist Workers Candidates Speak on Confronting a Historic Crisis and Why the Working Class Needs to Take Power.” Both Garza and Leonard work as meat packers.

Over the May 9–10 weekend supporters of the Garza campaign collected 325 signatures. The law requires 192 signatures of registered voters collected between April 28 and May 19 in order to place a candidate’s name on the ballot for District 1. Leonard will have write-in ballot status.

Earlier in the week Garza testified at a Boston City Council public hearing. About 60 people attended the meeting, which heard testimony on three measures being introduced in the City Council that deal with evictions and foreclosures.

The measures call for a six-month moratorium on foreclosures, prohibiting banks from evicting tenants or former owners in foreclosed properties who pay rent and are “responsible” tenants, and requiring banks to make a good faith effort to renegotiate with home-owners who were being foreclosed.

The Massachusetts Alliance Against

Predatory Lending organized speakers who worked with homeowners facing foreclosure as well as workers who were losing their homes to testify about the scope of the problem.

Eelciana Ogunjobi, a nurse, explained to the committee she had her home for 21 years. She remortgaged the house to finance needed repairs. When she got sick and could not make her new payments the bank started foreclosure proceedings.

Garza explained she was for an immediate halt of all home and farm foreclosures as well as evictions of tenants. “Working people are the creators of wealth, the capitalists are the devourers of wealth. Theirs is a predatory system, a bloodthirsty system. We need a revolutionary change.”

NATO troops join war exercises in Georgia

BY BEN JOYCE

More than 1,000 troops from 18 countries have joined NATO war games in Georgia, nine months after the Russian invasion of that country.

The war games began May 6 at a military base not far from the border with South Ossetia, where Russian troops have been stationed indefinitely since they effectively annexed the region from Georgia in August. The exercises will last for nearly a month and involve both member and non-member NATO forces.

NATO, a U.S.-led military alliance of the dominant imperialist powers of North America and Europe, was set up during the “Cold War” as a way



Militant/William Leonard

Socialist Workers Party candidate Laura Garza, left, collects signatures to get on ballot for Boston City Council race. Garza spoke at City Council public hearing in early May and called for immediate halt of all home and farm foreclosures and evictions of tenants.

to threaten the Soviet Union and other workers states. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, NATO has been used to carry out U.S. imperialism’s wars under the guise of “peacekeeping” or “fighting terror” while claiming to be an international force, as well as to maintain pressure on Moscow’s military aspirations.

Moscow and some of its allies refused an invitation to participate in the exercises, which they view as a challenge to Russia’s regional dominance. Russian President Dmitri Medvedev has called the war games “an overt provocation.”

Last August Russian tanks and soldiers barreled across Georgia’s border into the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, then part of northern Georgia, on the pretense that the Georgian government had violated Ossetian and Abkhaz national sovereignty. Russian troops have maintained a military presence there since then.

Moscow and the governments of the breakaway territories signed a treaty April 30 that establishes joint patrols indefinitely along the border with the rest of Georgia. According to the *New York Times*, the pact grants Russia’s border guards any land or buildings needed to patrol the area and gives

them many of the rights of Abkhaz and South Ossetian citizens.

That day two Russian ambassadors to NATO were expelled from the imperialist alliance’s headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, in retaliation for an alleged case of spying. NATO officials accused the two Russians of being undercover intelligence agents connected to an Estonian official who was convicted in Estonia in February of passing NATO secrets to Moscow.

In response to the moves by NATO, the Russian government kicked out two Canadian diplomats representing NATO in Moscow May 6.

The day before the NATO exercises were to start, a tank battalion of some 500 Georgian soldiers mutinied at a base about 25 miles outside of Tbilisi. Within hours the troops had surrendered and the Georgian government had arrested several of the battalion’s commanders. Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili accused Moscow of instigating the mutiny to derail the planned NATO war exercises.

Moscow denied the accusations. A statement from the Russian’s foreign ministry said, “We would like to reiterate that Russia, as a matter of principal, doesn’t interfere in Georgia’s domestic affairs.”

THE MILITANT

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Militant/Janice Lynn

Tom Baumann, SWP candidate for Manhattan borough president, speaks at Hunter College rally against cutbacks.

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Editor: Sam Manuel

Managing Editor: Martín Koppel

Business Manager: Angel Lariscy

Editorial volunteers: Tom Baumann, Róger Calero, Ved Dookhun, Seth Galinsky, Cindy Jaquith, Ben Joyce, Omari Musa, Doug Nelson, Jacob Perasso

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The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899

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Atlanta socialist candidates demand: Free Troy Davis!

The following statement was released May 11 by Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Atlanta, and Jacob Perasso, SWP candidate for Atlanta City Council president.

We pledge continued support to the fight demanding freedom for Troy Davis, and call for abolition of the death penalty.

We will be joining the May 19 demonstration at the state capitol here and urge others to participate in this important action.

We oppose the decision of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals to deny Troy Davis's motion to file a second habeas corpus petition. We support the call for the Chatham County District Attorney not to seek a death warrant until the U. S. Supreme Court reviews Davis's appeal.

We will join with all others to help

organize protests and meetings to condemn this decision. We urge everyone to review the facts of this case. We are confident that anyone doing so objectively will conclude that Troy Davis was framed up and will join the growing worldwide protest against the determination of the state of Georgia to execute him.

Davis's case is a powerful illustration of how the death penalty is a class-biased, racist weapon aimed at working people. Davis, an African American, was sentenced to death in 1991 for the shooting of a white cop. Evidence has since emerged showing police pressured witnesses to identify Davis as the killer. But he has been denied a new trial.

The United States is one of the five countries that carried out 88 percent of executions around the world in 2007. It is the country with the highest incarceration



Militant/Rachele Fruit

Martin Luther King Day rally in Atlanta demanding freedom for Troy Davis January 19. At center is Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Atlanta Lisa Potash.

rate in the world. Beyond the workers and farmers put to death by court order, a far higher number are executed on the streets by cops.

The number of prisoners on death row has risen sharply in the last three decades, as the employers' assault on workers' wages, job conditions, benefits, and unions has accelerated and met growing resistance from working people. The rulers wield the death penalty to try to instill fear and submission.

The capitalists' use of the death penalty is part of a broader package of anti-working-class measures—from stepped-up immigration raids and deportations, to loosening restrictions on spying against political organizations. These measures have been adopted with the support of both Democrats and Republicans, including the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act—passed under the William Clinton administration—that severely restricts the ability of death-row prisoners like Davis to get their cases reviewed.

It is only because his family has not given in, and hundreds have rallied and conducted a broad public campaign, that Davis's execution has been postponed three times. We urge all to demand: Free Troy Davis! Abolish the death penalty! Join the protests!

International day of action for Troy Davis

Continued from front page

the court denied that appeal, saying he had come forward with the issues and new evidence too late. They granted him a 30-day stay of execution so that he could apply for appeal to the Supreme Court.

Dissenting from the April 16 decision, Judge Rosemary Barkett wrote, "The concept of punishing an innocent defendant with the penalty of death simply because he did not file his papers as early as he should have is draconian." To do so in the face of a significant amount of evidence that may establish his actual innocence, she said, is "unconscionable and unconstitutional."

The May 19 international day of action will include activities in over 30 states across the United States, as well as several cities in Europe, Australia, and the Americas.

Davis's sister Martina Correia told the *Militant*, "We are asking people to write to Attorney General Eric Holder and to [President] Obama, asking them to repeal the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act." That act from the Clinton administration limits the number of appeals death row prisoners can make and serves as the basis for the court's denial of Davis's appeal.

Gabrielle Canon, a senior at the University of Southern California and an organizer for a march and vigil in Los Angeles, told the *Militant*, "The fact that he has been denied appeal so many times at different levels when

they don't even have any physical evidence against him is ridiculous. . . . The more people know about this case, the more they'll want to do something about it."

"The facts in this case are profound," Thenjiwe McHarris of Amnesty International in New York told the *Militant*. "It really shows the racial injustice within the criminal justice system." McHarris, who is helping organize a demonstration in New York's Union Square on the 19th, urged groups and individuals who oppose the death penalty or support

Davis's case to participate in a local action or reach out in their own way. (See SWP campaign statement on this page.)

In Atlanta, there will be a rally organized by the NAACP and Amnesty International on the Capitol steps. In Washington an interfaith service will be held at All Souls Unitarian Church. In Chicago activities will be held at Federal Plaza and outside the Student Center on the DePaul campus.

A list of activities can be found at: www.amnestyusa.org.

'Militant' \$105,000 fund drive at 84%, steams ahead in final weeks

BY ANGEL LARISCY

The eight-week campaign to raise \$105,000 to finance the socialist news-weekly the *Militant* is at full steam in the final weeks. Supporters of the paper in several cities have already gone over the top of local quotas.

A team of supporters of the *Militant* who went to the Thumann's meatpacking plant in Carlstadt, New Jersey, was able to help broaden the readership of the paper and raise money for the fund.

Holding the latest issue of the paper and a large black plastic bag, the team members explained to workers that the *Militant* is financed by many contributions from workers. The results? "One subscription, 13 first-time contributors to the *Militant* fund (totaling \$19.50),

and 13 single copies sold. Well worth it," wrote Mike Baumann.

The example from Baumann highlights why as a workers paper it is so important for readers of the *Militant* to finance its work. Contributions from workers, small and large, who know the importance and value of a paper that tells the truth week in and week out about the struggles of working people around the world and the impact of the deepening economic crisis on their lives, makes a huge difference in broadening its reach.

Supporters of the *Militant* in Chicago organized to go to Detroit last weekend to meet with a student who they had met at the May Day rally in that city. In addition to helping to sell the paper in the Latino community, he contributed \$34 to the fund.

"We have five new contributors," said Laura Anderson, the fund organizer in Chicago. "Today a coworker and meat packer who recently renewed his *Militant* subscription for the first time contributed \$5 to the fund."

The fund campaign ends May 19 with all money received in the *Militant* office by Wednesday, May 27 counting toward the final chart.

It's not too late to join the effort. Contact a distributor near you or send your contribution directly to the paper at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY, 10018.

'Militant' Fund Drive Spring 2009 ♦ Week 6 of 8

Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Philadelphia*	\$3,600	\$3,320	92%
Los Angeles	\$8,800	\$7,824	89%
New York	\$15,500	\$13,586	88%
Chicago	\$9,000	\$7,849	87%
Twin Cities, MN	\$6,600	\$5,546	84%
San Francisco	\$13,000	\$10,701	82%
Boston	\$2,800	\$2,265	81%
Seattle*	\$7,200	\$5,834	81%
Washington, D.C.*	\$5,400	\$4,387	81%
Des Moines, IA	\$1,900	\$1,408	74%
Miami	\$3,300	\$2,269	69%
Newark, NJ	\$3,200	\$2,202	69%
Atlanta	\$8,000	\$5,037	63%
Houston	\$3,000	\$1,200	40%
Other		\$550	
TOTAL	\$91,300	\$73,978	81%
CANADA*	\$7,500	\$7,629	102%
NEW ZEALAND	\$2,500	\$2,548	102%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	\$1,500	\$1,680	112%
Edinburgh	\$500	\$355	71%
TOTAL	\$2,000	\$2,035	102%
AUSTRALIA	\$1,050	\$1,090	104%
SWEDEN	\$400	\$448	112%
TOTAL	\$104,750	\$87,728	84%
SHOULD BE	\$105,000	\$78,750	75%
* Raised quota			

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Washington, Tel Aviv differ over strategy in Mideast

BY SETH GALINSKY

A May 5 article in the daily *Haaretz* newspaper notes “concern” by high-ranking Israeli officials over what it calls the “sharp decline in the coordination between Israel and the United States on security and state affairs since President Barack Obama entered the White House and especially since the formation of Israel’s new government.”

Benjamin Netanyahu, Likud Party leader, became Israel’s prime minister in March, after pulling together a coalition that included the Labor Party, led by Defense Minister Ehud Barak, and Ysrael Beiteinu, a rightist party led by Avigdor Lieberman.

Unlike Ehud Olmert, the previous prime minister, who said he was for a Palestinian state alongside Israel, Netanyahu has been more vague saying, “Palestinians should have the ability to govern their lives.” He also says he is willing to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority, which runs parts of the West Bank.

Both U.S. vice president Joseph Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have openly criticized aspects of Tel Aviv’s policies in recent weeks.

“Israel has to work toward a two-state solution,” Biden told 6,000 delegates to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee annual conference May 5. “You’re not going to like my saying this but [do] not build more settlements, dismantle existing outposts and allow Pal-

estinians freedom of movement.”

Biden was referring to Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which has been under Israeli occupation since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Under the 1993 Oslo accords, Tel Aviv agreed to allow the Palestinian Authority to administer parts of the West Bank, home to 2.2 million Palestinians. The number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank grew from 230,000 in 2005 to at least 270,000 at the end of 2007.

Netanyahu for expanding settlements

Netanyahu says he is opposed to new Jewish settlements on the West Bank, but that he is for expansion of existing ones. While Tel Aviv has abandoned hopes for a Greater Israel that would include the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Israeli government is building a winding wall through the West Bank to separate Palestinians from both Israel and the settlers.

Begun in mid-2002, some 310 miles of the planned 500-mile concrete wall have been finished. But only seven-and-a-half miles were completed last year and the 2010 completion date is looking less likely, another sign of Tel Aviv’s inability to impose a solution on the Palestinians.

In early March, during a joint news conference with Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Palestinian Authority, Clinton criticized Israeli plans to demolish dozens of Palestinian homes in East Jeru-



Oren Ziv/Activestills.org

Demonstration at Um Salmuna on West Bank in 2007 protests construction of wall separating off Palestinians from Israel and settlers. New Israeli administration of prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu differs with Washington on best course for Israel in Middle East.

salem. Clinton said that the home demolitions undermined the “road map,” a U.S.-backed proposal to resolve the conflict.

The *Haaretz* article said that Israeli officials complain that Washington is consulting with Tel Aviv “much less” than the Bush administration used to, especially in relation to Syria and Iran.

Netanyahu made opposition to Iran’s nuclear program a central part of his election campaign, charging that Tehran was planning to manufacture nuclear weapons that could threaten Israel. He has floated the idea of an air attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities. Washington has opposed that course for now; instead it seeks Tehran’s cooperation for the U.S. war in Afghanistan at the same time that

it pressures the Iranian government to halt its nuclear program.

Divergence between the foreign policy interests of the U.S. and Israeli ruling classes is not new, nor does Washington base it on sympathy for the struggle of the Palestinian people.

In the course of the first war against Iraq, from 1990–91, U.S. imperialism strengthened its ties with the Egyptian and Saudi regimes, and to some extent with the Syrian government, all of which had joined the alliance against Baghdad. Washington no longer had to rely exclusively on Tel Aviv to advance U.S. interests in the region.

Differences between the U.S. and Israeli governments receded however, under William Clinton, who was the most pro-Israeli president in decades, and under George W. Bush. The divergences are once again coming to the fore as Washington seeks to gain advantage from its progress in putting together a somewhat reliable regime in Iraq.

U.S. aid to Tel Aviv

Israel receives about \$3 billion in military and economic aid from Washington every year, an amount that has hardly changed over the last 25 years. It makes up just 1.5 percent of Israel’s gross domestic product and just over 4 percent of the Israeli government budget.

The results of Tel Aviv’s victory in its war in the Gaza Strip in December and January was reflected in a five-hour interview with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal printed in the *New York Times* May 5. Meshal said that Hamas would no longer fire rockets at Israel and would prevent other groups from doing so as well.

U.S. troops in Iraqi cities

Continued from front page
carried out recent attacks against U.S. forces.

While Odierno claimed that U.S. troops are out of most cities and “on our way out of Baghdad,” he said that “a major operation” is continuing in Mosul in northern Iraq.

“We’re still clearing Mosul,” he said. “It’s neighborhood by neighborhood.”

Meanwhile, Iraqi oil ministry spokesperson Assem Jihad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced they had reached an agreement that would allow the Kurdish government to export oil for the first time.

Ashti Hawrami, the KRG minister for natural resources, stated in an announcement that 60,000 barrels a day will be piped from the Tawke oil field starting June 1. Production of 40,000 barrels a

More than 2,100 new ‘Militant’ readers

Continued from front page

unteers combined participation in activities in defense of workers’ rights, for legalization of immigrants, in support

of the Cuban Revolution, against the Israeli military assault on Gaza, and other political work, with introducing the revolutionary press to workers, students, and farmers.

Sales on campuses, in working-class communities, and at political events, were the main avenues through which supporters of the paper won new readers.

In the last two weeks of the drive leading up to and beyond the May Day demonstrations in cities across the country, many supporters of the *Militant* organized to gain the momentum needed to reach their quotas. Socialist workers from Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia combined their efforts on May 10 to sell seven subscriptions to workers from Guatemala and others who work in the poultry plants and in the hard-hit construction industry of the Delmarva Peninsula, reports Glova Scott from Washington, D.C.

“Picking up renewals, meeting people at the Cuba conference in Kingston, Ontario, participating in the Tamil struggle, and supporters around the country giving a last push helped to finish the drive with 116 subscriptions,” writes Annette Kouri from Canada.

In addition to extensive sales in working-class neighborhoods and on the job, distributors of the *Militant* turned a lot of attention to meeting students on college campuses. Through participating with students in political ac-

tivity and reaching out to them through sales in student center cafeterias and off literature tables, hundreds of young people signed up for the *Militant* during this drive.

In New York City, Seth Galinsky reports, “We sold 11 subscriptions at the Borough of Manhattan Community College and Hunter College campuses in the last two days of the drive.”

The success of the subscription campaign means a lot of rewarding follow-up work is possible now for *Militant* volunteers who value the paper and want to spread its revolutionary perspective. Over the next month the job is to get to know those who are reading the paper, and join them in working-class struggles.

‘Militant’ Subscription Drive

March 21 – May 12, 2009
Final results

Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Twin Cities, MN	140	153	109%
Los Angeles	125	133	106%
Des Moines, IA	130	137	105%
Houston	95	100	105%
Newark, NJ	75	78	104%
Philadelphia	75	78	104%
Seattle	101	105	104%
Atlanta	160	164	103%
Chicago	120	123	103%
San Francisco	150	154	103%
Boston	60	61	102%
Washington, D.C.	70	70	100%
New York	280	267	95%
Miami	150	95	63%
Other		15	
TOTAL	1731	1733	100%
CANADA	115	116	101%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	35	35	100%
London	80	85	106%
TOTAL	115	120	104%
NEW ZEALAND	70	70	100%
AUSTRALIA*	60	67	112%
SWEDEN	20	23	115%
Total	2111	2129	99%
Should be	2150	2150	100%
*raised quota			

Miami: court convicts 5 in ‘terrorist’ frame-up

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

MIAMI—After failing in two previous attempts, federal prosecutors succeeded in convicting five Black construction workers on frame-up charges of “conspiracy to commit terrorism.”

Narseal Batiste, the supposed leader of the group, faces up to 70 years in jail; Patrick Abraham up to 50; and Stanley Phanor, Rotschild Augustine, and Burson Augustin each up to 30 years. The sixth defendant, Naudimar Herrera, was acquitted. They are known as the Liberty City 6 for the mostly Black section of Miami where they live.

As in the two previous trials, the government’s case mainly rested on the testimony of two FBI informants, Elie Assad and Abbas al-Saidi, whose activities also entrapped the five men. Assad presented himself as a representative of al-Qaeda and pressed for organizing actions, including bombing government buildings. Al-Saidi promised to furnish money to the group.

Both Assad and al-Saidi had previously been government informers. They were paid more than \$130,000 plus expense money for helping to set up the Liberty City defendants. When the arrests were made almost three years ago at the group’s office, a warehouse in Liberty City, no weapons, terrorism plans, or literature was found. The defendants explained they were only dealing with Assad and al-

Saidi to get money for their group.

The first trial ended in December 2007 with the acquittal of a seventh defendant, Lyglenson Lemorin, and a mistrial for the other six. Four months later a mistrial was again declared for the six remaining defendants.

Lemorin, a legal U.S. resident originally from Haiti, remains in custody facing possible deportation, as the government is attempting to try him in immigration court on the same charges for which he had been found innocent.

Upon leaving the courthouse Herrera denounced the government frame-up. “They don’t deserve this. All of us were supposed to be innocent,” he told the *Miami Herald*. “It’s all B.S. They’re going to come back and fight this.”

“We were really about helping the community,” Herrera continued. “It wasn’t until this informant came into the picture that things changed. All we wanted from him was money. It was like a dangling carrot.”

At one point in its deliberations the jury informed Judge Joan Lenard that they were deadlocked on one of the counts and one of the defendants. She told them to keep trying, according to the *New York Times*.



Naudimar Herrera, one of Liberty City Six, outside federal courthouse May 11. Herrera, who was acquitted, insists his five codefendants are also innocent.

Tamils in Canada protest Sri Lanka war drive



Militant/John Steele

MONTREAL—Some 800 Tamils demonstrate in downtown Montreal at the U.S. consulate May 8. The protest demanded a halt to the military assault by the government of Sri Lanka against tens of thousands of Tamil civilians and members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who have been surrounded by troops in the northeastern part of the country.

Protesters demanded Washington and Ottawa force the Sri Lankan government to agree to an immediate and permanent cease-fire and a UN-monitored referendum on the Tamil people’s right to self-determination. Tamils are an oppressed minority in Sri Lanka who have been fighting for a Tamil homeland for decades.

Tamil organizations in Canada have called on Ottawa to lift its designation of the LTTE as a terrorist organization. “We are not terrorists. We are fighting for our freedom,” Kalpana Rama told the *Militant* at a May 6 picket line at the consulate.

On April 20, 30,000 Tamils marched on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. In Toronto May 10, thousands of Tamils blocked the Gardiner Expressway for hours. There are about 300,000 Tamils in Canada.

—JOHN STEELE

Australian rulers debate policy on asylum

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—A deadly explosion on a boat carrying 47 refugees from Afghanistan has spurred debate among capitalist parties here over how to tighten “border security” against an expected surge of asylum-seekers arriving by sea.

The boat exploded April 16 off the northwest coast of Australia. Five died and others suffered severe burns. Nineteen boats have arrived in Australian waters since last September, carrying 711 refugees, mostly from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

Many Afghans escaping the war in their country, Tamils fleeing oppres-

sion by the government in Sri Lanka, and other immigrants make their way to Malaysia and from there cross the Malacca Straits to Java, Indonesia, seeking refugee status. Frustrated with years of waiting, some set out by boat to Australia. Hundreds have perished making this dangerous sea trip.

Survivors of the April 16 explosion were ferried by two Australian navy patrol boats and then by air to hospitals in Broome, Darwin, and Perth.

As news of the explosion broke, West Australian Liberal premier Colin Barnett claimed the refugees had deliberately doused the boat in petrol. This speculation echoed the “children

overboard” scandal in 2001, when the government of former prime minister John Howard of the Liberal Party falsely claimed that refugees had thrown their children into the sea.

Farad Popal, president of the Afghan Community Association of Western Australia, told the *Australian* that some refugees held in Perth said the explosion happened after the crewmen spilled fuel while refueling the engine.

The Liberal opposition has claimed Labor’s “soft” policies on asylum-seekers are encouraging many to make the perilous voyage.

But Labor prime minister Kevin Rudd insists his immigration policy is “hardline, tough and targeted.” He denounced “people-smugglers” as “the vilest form of human life.”

Under Howard, Canberra paid for internment camps for refugees on the Pacific islands of Manus, in Papua New Guinea, and Nauru. Rudd ended that last year and asylum-seekers arriving by boat are now detained on Christmas Island, 1,600 miles from Australia in the Indian Ocean.

Special visas granted to asylum-seekers are now permanent, not temporary, and no longer discriminate against refugees who arrive by sea.

Canberra is increasing collaboration with the Indonesian, Malaysian, and Sri Lankan governments to try to criminalize “people-smuggling.” The Australian embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, closest to the Afghan border, is closed to refugee applications.

Meanwhile, as part of the growing imperialist war in Afghanistan, Canberra plans to send another 450 soldiers as part of the U.S.-led occupation forces there. The Australian government already has some 1,100 troops in Afghanistan.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 25, 1984

Recent events in Washington have drawn the United States further into war in Central America. On May 9, Pres. Ronald Reagan gave a speech slandering the political aims of Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Salvadoran rebel forces with the aim of undermining widespread opposition to escalating U.S. aggression in the region.

Less than 24 hours later, under the phony cover of “aiding democracy” in the region, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives voted 212-208 to authorize another \$129.4 million in U.S. military aid, mostly for the dictatorship in El Salvador.

The vote for the Salvador aid was *bipartisan*, with many Democrats backing it. Other Democrats, who voted against it, simply think more cover should be given by tacking on empty phrases about human rights.



May 25, 1959

A revolutionary agrarian reform law was passed by the Cuban government May 17 stripping United States-owned sugar mills in Cuba of their cane plantations. The announcement has been met by consternation among American capitalists with large investments in Cuba.

The new law prohibits the operation of a cane plantation unless every stockholder is a Cuban citizen. It also provides that only citizens can purchase land and forbids foreigners from inheriting land.

The U.S.-owned sugar mills were given 90 days to comply with the law. After that their plantations will be expropriated if they have not met its provisions. The law also sets a limit of 1,000 acres that any person or company may own. Thus the law is aimed at both the imperialist interests and the large land-owning class.



May 26, 1934

(TELEGRAM TO THE MILITANT) May 22—In the most imposing display of labor solidarity and militancy Minneapolis has ever seen, a mighty picket line of the General Drivers’ Union, five thousand strong, swept through the Wholesale Market today, putting a complete stop to every attempt to move commercial trucks except those authorized by special permission of the union.

Today’s action followed daily pitched battles on Saturday and Monday in which the cops and special deputies slugged and arrested men, women and children. With the entire labor movement roused to fury by these attacks the striking drivers, reinforced by other unionists, returned to the scene of conflict today and took back to union headquarters the badges of all the rats serving as special deputies who failed to get out of the market in time.

California students host meeting on Cuban Five

BY BETSEY STONE

DAVIS, California—Seventy-five students and others turned out May 6 for a program at the University of California campus here on the campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails. Most were hearing the facts of the case for the first time.

Sigma Lambda Beta, a Latino-based fraternity, sponsored the meeting. The campus chapter, mostly Chicano students, has organized a number of “cultural awareness” events at the Davis campus, located in the heart of the Sacramento Valley, an agricultural center. The fraternity’s members mobilized to build the meeting on short notice, distributing colorful flyers urging students to learn about the five—Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González, Fernando González, and Gerardo Hernández.

Known as the Cuban Five, the men, who are serving draconian sentences in U.S. federal prisons, are considered heroes in Cuba.

The guest speakers were Alicia Jrapko, national coordinator of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five, and Martín Koppel, managing editor of the *Militant* newspaper. They emphasized the importance of such meetings in getting out the truth about the case and winning new support for the defense of the five.

“The prosecution and jailing of the five Cubans by the U.S. government is a travesty of justice that threatens the constitutional rights of all of us,” Koppel said.

Frame-up charges

The charge against the five of “conspiracy to commit espionage” was a frame-up, Koppel said, as was the charge against Hernández of “conspiracy to commit murder.” What they were doing, he explained, was gathering information on U.S.-based ultra-rightwing groups that have a history of violent attacks on Cuba, including a string of bombings of Cuban hotels in 1997.

“Because there was no evidence that the five Cubans spied on the U.S. government,” Koppel said, “prosecutors charged them with ‘conspiracy’ to do so. They wiretapped their phones, burglarized their apartments, and used secret evidence that the five and their lawyers

were given restricted or no access to.”

Koppel pointed out that this and brutalities such as holding the five in solitary confinement for 17 months are examples of the stepped-up attacks on the rights of working people in this country.

Jrapko opened her remarks by pointing to pictures of the five at the front of the room, telling a little about each of them and the length of their prison sentences—Guerrero and Labañino, life in prison; René González, 15 years; Fernando González, 19 years; and Hernández, a double life term.

“Cuba has a right to defend itself,” Jrapko explained. “For years, the U.S. has attacked Cuba, including a 1961 CIA-organized military invasion,” known as the Bay of Pigs. She pointed to how, while incarcerating the five Cubans, the U.S. government has supported and protected opponents of the revolution who have carried out deadly attacks on Cuba, including the blowing up in midair of a Cubana Airlines plane in 1976, killing all 73 on board.

Jrapko urged the students to join the international campaign to win the right of Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva, the wives of Gerardo Hernández and René González respectively, to visit their husbands in prison. The two women have been repeatedly denied visas by U.S. authorities.

Working-class fighters for justice

“The Cuban Five are working-class fighters for justice,” Koppel added. “Most were student leaders in their youth. Three of them were among the more than 300,000 Cubans who responded to a call from the government of Angola to help drive back invasions of that country by the racist South African apartheid regime. While in prison they have extended solidarity to other militants, including the Puerto Rican political prisoners, and support the struggle of immigrant workers.”

“The employers and their government know that with the deepening economic crisis, as they drive down our standard of living, there will be more resistance from working people,” said Koppel. “The struggle against the injustices in the case of the five is part of the fight to defend workers’ rights in this country.”

An hour-long discussion period followed the talks. “Is it worthwhile to



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Students at May 6 meeting at University of California at Davis discuss the case of the five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the United States since 1998 on frame-up “conspiracy” charges. Some 75 people, in their majority Chicano youth, attended.

defend the Cuban government?” one student asked. “Are the Cuban people better off? What is the situation of racism in Cuba? Is it segregated?”

In response, Koppel pointed out that joining the campaign to free the Cuban Five is not contingent on a person’s political views or what they think of the Cuban Revolution. “The campaign to free the five should be built on the broadest basis possible and include all supporters of democratic rights who believe the injustices meted out to them should be fought.”

He then described how the 1959 revolution uprooted the institutionalized racial discrimination that existed under the U.S.-backed dictatorship. “Because of such social gains the revolution has strong support among working people who are Black,” he said. “Millions of people became involved and workers won greater control over their livelihood and destiny.”

Jrapko pointed to the role of Cuba’s system of free education, free health care, and more access to child care, as important to bringing more equality to Cuba.

Other questions from students included: Why does the U.S. government go to such extremes to attack Cuba? Do you think a revolution is possible in the United States?

“The government has a double purpose in its attack on the five,” Koppel pointed out. “First, it’s aimed at us. To make us think twice before standing up to the government and the employers. Second, it is to punish the Cuban people for having the audacity to make a socialist revolution. They hate Cuba because of its political example, for the revolution itself, where millions rose up, carried out a land reform, a campaign against illiteracy, and took over the means of production.”

Koppel added that not all of the young people who led the revolution in Cuba started out as socialists. “But they found that to end the brutal conditions they faced, to gain land for farmers, to create jobs, to win their national sovereignty, they had to take on the wealthy rulers in whose interest it was to block these changes. They had to take over the sugar refineries, the banks, the industries.”

Fight for right to hold meeting

“The U.S. is part of the world,” Koppel emphasized. “As we enter what will be decades of economic crisis, intertwined with imperialist wars, we will face the same challenges and necessity to take the power out of the hands of the

wealthy ruling class.”

Daniel Mendoza, a member of Sigma Lambda Beta and a participant in a university-organized study abroad program in Cuba in 2008, chaired the meeting. He described a fight waged by the fraternity to have the right to hold the meeting. Mendoza said the application for the room was initially denied by school administrators on the basis that Koppel was described on some Web site as a “registered communist,” and a talk by him could potentially provoke “violence” on the Davis campus.

To applause, Mendoza explained that the fraternity did not fall for this argument or back down. Despite continued stalling and roadblocks thrown up by the administration, they persisted and the meeting was able to take place.

Many leaving the room at the end of the meeting picked up literature on the case of the Cuban Five and signed the mailing list to get more information and future updates.

On May 4, Koppel also spoke about the Cuban Five at a U.S. history class at the Mission campus of City College of San Francisco. The 25 students in attendance engaged in a lively discussion following Koppel’s presentation.

In response to Koppel’s account of the FBI wiretapping and burglary of the homes of the five before their arrest, one student said he didn’t realize such undemocratic attacks were used before the Patriot Act was passed into law.

Koppel answered that both the Republicans and Democrats have been responsible for using assaults on constitutional rights. Laws passed under the administration of William Clinton allowed the government more leeway to wiretap and use secret evidence, which was expanded under George W. Bush with the Patriot Act.

More on the Cuban Five

Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution

Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Guevara. This book tells the story of immigration to Cuba, as well as more than 50 years of revolutionary nationalism, from Cuba to Angola, Nicaragua, and political forces that gave birth to the Cuban Revolution. Also available in Spanish and Chinese.

To Speak the Truth by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara

In historic speeches before the United Nations, Guevara spoke to the world, explaining why the U.S. government fears Cuba and why Washington’s effort to destroy it will fail.

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Militant photos by Carole Lesnick

Martín Koppel, seated above, and Alicia Jrapko, right, at May 6 meeting on Cuban Five at the University of California at Davis. Meeting was organized by Sigma Lambda Beta fraternity and featured discussion on workers rights, the Cuban Revolution, and more. Moderator Daniel Mendoza stands at left (above).

Students at S.F. campus discuss Cuban Revolution

BY ANDREA MORELL

SAN FRANCISCO—About 60 people, mostly students, participated in a lively discussion here May 5 at the City College of San Francisco on the subject of the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*.

The book is comprised of interviews with Armando Choy, Moisés Sío Wong, and Gustavo Chui, three Cubans of Chinese descent who as youth joined the revolutionary struggle that overthrew a U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959. All took part in the unfolding socialist revolution, rose to the rank of army general, and today carry out key leadership responsibilities.

The event, part of City College's "East Meets West" lecture series, was held at the new library of the Mission campus, located in a working-class district of mainly Latin American immigrants. Librarian Anthony Costa welcomed the audience, which included students from an English as a second language class and a Latin American studies course.

The speaker, Martín Koppel, who helped interview the three generals, said the book tells the story of how ordinary men and women, with a leadership true to their interests, made a revolution that transformed society and themselves. It draws particular interest among working people and youth who sense that the capitalist economic crisis today will lead to growing catastrophe for millions in the world.

"The example of Cuba's socialist revolution has greater importance now than ever," Koppel said, as it becomes clear that "the world crisis we are entering is not a temporary downturn, and is not the result of government policies or greedy bankers but of the capitalist system itself. Its outcome will be decided by the capacity of workers and farmers to organize a revolutionary movement and take state power."

Pathfinder Press published *Our History Is Still Being Written*, he said, to make known the lessons of the Cuban Revolution and why it points the way forward for working people, including right here in the United States. The book also opens a door on a little-known chapter of the history of the Chinese in Cuba and their outstanding role in Cuba's revolutionary history.

Koppel said the generals were among the thousands of Cubans of their generation who refused to accept the brutal conditions in capitalist Cuba, where sugarcane workers were jobless nine

months of the year and where protesting workers and students were commonly tortured and murdered by the Batista dictatorship.

With the 1959 victory, they found that the struggle for greater social equality did not end but was just beginning. Millions became involved in shaping their future, from an agrarian reform that guaranteed land to peasants to a successful nationwide literacy campaign. Women were massively drawn into the workforce, the militias, and all aspects of social and political life. When these changes ran up against the economic interests of the U.S. and Cuban capitalists, working people and their leadership did not back down. They proceeded to take control of their economy and to run it in the interests of the great majority.

A student asked about the process of assimilation of Chinese into the broader Cuban population. Koppel answered that the spread of Cubans of Chinese ancestry throughout the population is difficult to trace, but that today a wide spectrum of Cubans of all skin colors will say with pride that they have ancestors who hailed from China.

Internationalism with no strings

Another questioner asked whether there are exchanges between China and Cuba such as the one between Cuba and Venezuela whereby the services of Cuban doctors are exchanged for Venezuelan oil. Koppel replied that Cuba does not send doctors to Venezuela or anywhere else in order to receive oil or other goods, much less to plunder the natural resources of other nations as the imperialist powers do. It fosters internationalist solidarity, with medical personnel and other volunteers serving in many countries as part of "paying our debt to humanity," as Cuban leader

Ontario conference celebrates Cuban Revolution



Militant/Eric Simpson

KINGSTON, Ontario—Ricardo Alarcón, the president of Cuba's National Assembly, speaking during the closing session of "The Measure of a Revolution: Cuba, 1959–2009," an academic conference held here May 7–9. "We will not negotiate our principles," said Alarcón. "If the Obama administration wants us to believe that there is a change, they should free the five Cubans unjustly held in U.S. prisons."

More than 200 participants registered for the conference, the majority from the United States. Alarcón headed a delegation of 39 Cubans.

Such a conference could not take place in the United States or Cuba because of travel restrictions imposed by Washington on U.S. citizens and Cubans.

— MICHEL DUGRÉ

Fidel Castro has often said.

Others in the audience asked about Chinese-Cuban relations. Koppel gave examples of the active relations between the two countries today, seen in the presence of Chinese buses in Havana that Cuba has purchased to ease the transportation crisis, and the 1,900 Chinese students studying in Cuba.

He noted that during the Sino-Soviet rift from the mid-1960s through the 1980s, relations were virtually nonexistent between Beijing and Havana. Their foreign policies sharply conflicted in Angola where, beginning in 1975, Cuban volunteer combatants—including Choy, Chui, and Sío Wong—aided newly independent Angola against U.S.-backed invasions by apartheid South Africa, while Beijing supported imperialist-backed Angolan insurgents.

In response to a question about the ef-

fect of tourism on Havana's Chinatown, Koppel said that a sharp economic crisis followed the sudden cutoff of favorable trade relations between Cuba and Moscow in the early 1990s. Tourism was developed as a necessity to help gain hard currency, including the revival of restaurants in Havana's Chinatown. Owners of these restaurants are allowed to earn hard-currency income, which has helped finance traditional Chinese-Cuban associations but also reinforces bourgeois-minded layers in that district. Those layers are backed by Chinese entrepreneurs in other countries and the pro-market policies of the government in China.

The capitalist crisis in the world poses two different roads, Koppel said, the dog-eat-dog road of capitalism, and the road charted by the Cuban leadership of "turning to the capacities and solidarity of working people."

Toilers bear brunt of offensive in Pakistan

Continued from front page

their rivals in bordering India. Washington has pressed Islamabad to commit more of its regular army to fighting Taliban forces in the northwest, without much success—6,000 were relocated in late April for the offensive.

The Pakistani military is razing homes to the ground and employing tanks and artillery backed by fighter jets and helicopter gunships in its assault in the Swat district as well as parts of neighboring Dir, and Buner. Paratroopers were dropped in Swat and Dir May 12.

Pakistan's interior minister, Rehman Malik, said more than 700 Islamist fighters were killed by Pakistani forces in the first four days of the army offensive. The military has not released any estimates of civilian casualties, but they are high, according to press accounts.

Fighting between the government and Taliban forces over the last nine months has made more than 1 million Pakistanis homeless. An estimated 600,000 people fled Swat and the surrounding area in the last four days, joining 550,000 internal refugees who fled battlegrounds since last August. Only some are "lucky" enough to make their way into crowded refugee camps set up by the government.

Many residents have been trapped by government air strikes and shoot-on-sight curfews on one hand and roadblocks set up by Taliban on the other. All electricity, water, and gas has been cut throughout Swat. Communications, including cell phone service, have been disconnected in many areas. "I want to pick up a gun and fight the Taliban and the army," Said Quraysh told the daily *Dawn*, as he set up a tent in a refugee camp.

The Pakistani military has accompanied its offensive with propaganda. The Taliban "are the same as Jewish forces who are against the existence and security of the country," one military pamphlet said, according to *Dawn*. The pamphlet added that the government had allowed Taliban into the area to prosper and obtain a source of income, but that the Taliban violated its agreement by refusing to lay down their arms, taking over land, extorting money, and forcing marriages.

The Pakistani government helped establish the Taliban movement in the 1990s, in large part to gain influence and "stability" in Afghanistan amid the chaos following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. One of the consequences of Islamabad's alliance with Washington following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in

2001 was a souring of relations between Islamabad and sections of the Taliban in Pakistan that increasingly began to challenge the Pakistani government.

The Pakistani military has been at war with the Swat Taliban off and on over the last two years.

In mid-February the Taliban agreed to lay down their arms in exchange for a withdrawal of Pakistani forces and the implementation of sharia, Islamic law, in Swat and several surrounding districts comprising some one-third of the country's North West Frontier Province. Islamabad then signed a peace agreement with Taliban forces in Bajur, in the country's Federal Administered Tribal Areas.

The Swat Taliban did not lay down their arms, but instead used the reprieve to expand their military operations and control, including an advance into Buner, some 60 miles from Islamabad. They established a base of support among a layer of landless peasants by expropriating some of the largest landlords in the region. They took over emerald mines, extorted businesses, and kidnapped wealthy individuals for ransom.

In addition, the Obama administration became increasingly opposed to the Swat peace deal and pressured Islamabad to respond.

Revolution...

Written Cuban Revolution

Moisés Sío Wong talk about the historic place of Chinese in Cuba, more than five decades of revolutionary action and internationalism, and Venezuela. Through their stories the social history of the Cuban nation and still shape our epoch unfold.

—\$20

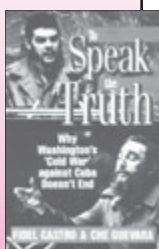
Castro and Castro address the peoples of the world, the example of the socialist revolution in Cuba.

—\$17

es on the Cuban Revolution

Contributor listed on page 8!

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Workers defense guards needed to fight fascist gangs

Printed below are excerpts from *Fascism and Big Business* by Daniel Guerin, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. Written in the mid-1930s, the author shows how fascism arises from the specific conditions of capitalist social crisis. At first covertly, then increasingly openly, layers of big business financed and promoted the fascist movements in Italy and Germany. Guerin contrasts the fascists' initially radical anticapitalist demagoguery with their moves to shore up the capitalist profit system once they form a government. The piece below is from the chapter titled "Fascist strategy on the march to power." It describes the role of reformist leaders in relying on the capitalist state to counter fascist threats instead of direct action by the working class. Copyright ©1973 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY DANIEL GUERIN

How did the labor movement defend itself against the fascist gangs during this first phase? In the beginning, the bold military tactics of the Black Shirts or Brown Shirts took the workers by surprise, and their reply was feeble. But they would have quickly adapted themselves, spontaneously, to their adversary's tactics if their own leaders, afraid



Anti-Nazi rally of 50,000 at Madison Square Garden in New York City, Feb. 20, 1939. Action was called by Socialist Workers Party. Such street protests were a working-class alternative to calls by reformist leaders to rely upon the bourgeois state to take on fascists.

of direct action, had not systematically put a brake on their militancy.

Let us be careful not to reply to fascist violence, the reformist leaders said in both Italy and Germany; we should arouse "public opinion" against us. Above all, let us avoid forming combat groups and semi-military bodies, for we should risk antagonizing the public authorities, who, we are confident, will dissolve the semi-military groups of fascism! Let us not borrow the weapons of fascism, for on that ground we are beaten in advance.

These legalistic and defeatist tactics tended to profoundly demoralize the working class, at the same time as they increased the enemy's audacity, self-confidence, and feeling of invincibility. If from their first exploits the fascist bands had come up against organized proletarian resistance and suffered harsh reprisals, they would have thought twice before undertaking "punitive expeditions" or raids on proletarian meetings. They would also have gained fewer recruits. And the victories won by the proletariat in the anti-fascist struggle would have given it just that "dynamic force" which was lacking.

In Italy

The Socialist and union leaders obstinately refused to reply to fascism blow for blow, to arm and organize

themselves in military fashion. "Fascism cannot in any case be conquered in an armed struggle but only in a legal struggle," insisted the *Battaglia Sindacale*. In the province of Rovigo, union leader Matteotti and the labor exchanges gave the word: "Stay home: do not respond to provocations. Even silence, even cowardice, are sometimes heroic." As they possessed contacts in the state apparatus, the socialists on several occasions were offered arms to protect themselves from the fascists. But "they rejected these offers, saying that it was the duty of the state to protect the citizen against the armed attacks of other citizens."

They relied on the bourgeois state to defend them against the fascist bands. Hence in the spring of 1921, they took seriously Prime Minister Bonomi's attempt to "reconcile" the Socialists and fascists. They imagined that the fascists would dissolve their semi-military bodies on their own initiative. In the Chamber, Turati, turning toward Mussolini and his friends, exclaimed in a pathetic tone: "I shall say to you only this: let us really disarm!" The "peace pact" was signed August 3.

But a few months later the fascists denounced the "pact," and civil war was resumed. Then the Socialists looked to the public authorities to

dissolve the fascist bands. On December 26, the government did send a circular to provincial governors calling for the occupation of the headquarters and confiscation of all arms of the semi-military bodies, as well as for the prosecution of those who organized them. But the carrying out of these measures was left to the local authorities, and the governors and their assistants limited themselves to a few raids directed, as might be expected, chiefly against the People's Houses and workers' organizations "to confiscate," writes Rossi, "the few arms that might remain there, thus leaving the way clear for the fascist onslaught."

To make up for the shortcomings of the Socialist and trade union leaders, a number of militants of various tendencies—revolutionary syndicalists, left socialists, young socialists, Communists, Republicans, etc.—together with several ex-officers, created in 1921, at the instigation of a certain Mingrino, an anti-fascist militia, the *Arditi del Popolo*. But this militia was recognized officially neither by the Socialist Party nor by the Federation of Labor, and in fact received only their hostility. "The *Arditi del Popolo*," mocked the *Avanti* on July 7, 1921, "perhaps has the *illusion* that it can dam up the armed movement of the reaction. . . ." The Socialist Party, when it signed the "peace pact" with the fascists, was only too happy to seize the occasion to "repudiate the organization and acts of the *Arditi del Popolo*." The Communists in their turn ordered their members to leave the militia on the pretext that the *Arditi del Popolo* included "doubtful" elements, "without class consciousness." They organized separate "Communist Squadrons," which, except for a few actions undertaken in Milan, Trieste, etc., played a rather obscure role. The *Arditi del Popolo*, with the proper leadership, could have become the rallying point for all the proletarian forces who were ready to reply to fascism with arms. But left to themselves, repudiated by the two proletarian parties and the Federation of Labor, they became a real force only in a few isolated towns.

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IOWA: Des Moines: 3707 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 255-1707. E-mail: swpdesmoines@qwestoffice.net

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 13 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Boston. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: swpboston@verizon.net

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: 1311 1/2 E. Lake St. Zip: 55407. Tel: (612) 729-1205.

E-mail: tcswp@qwestoffice.net

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NEW YORK: Manhattan: 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 188 W. Wyoming Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 455-2682. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net

TEXAS: Houston: 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 688-4919. E-mail: swp.houston1@sbcglobal.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 143 Kennedy St. NW Suite 15. Zip: 20011. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

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FRANCE

Paris: P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 276-8885. E-mail: clauack@xtra.co.nz

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: kfstockholm@tele2.se

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: 020-7613-2466. E-mail: clondon@onetel.com

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U.S. troops out of Afghanistan!

Working people around the world should stand in solidarity with university students in Kabul, Afghanistan, who poured into the streets May 10 to denounce recent U.S. missile strikes that killed as many as 147 civilians in western Afghanistan. Like the 200 young women who marched in Kabul several weeks earlier for women’s rights (see May 4 *Militant*), the students demonstrated that the Afghan people are not the victims they are portrayed as by the imperialist powers and their media, but actors in the class battles unfolding on that part of the globe.

Washington proclaimed itself the savior of Afghanistan when it invaded that country in 2001—the opening shot in its “global war on terror.” Eight years later, that image is fading in the eyes of the local population, which has witnessed village after village bombed by U.S. forces seeking to rout Islamist fighters. As one of the Kabul students’ banner said, the U.S. government is “the biggest terrorist around the world.”

The events in Afghanistan go hand in hand with developments in neighboring Pakistan. With Washington’s backing the Pakistani army has relaunched military operations against Taliban forces in the Swat region, forcing 600,000 civilians to flee the area and trapping many other toilers between the Pakistani army and the Taliban.

In Iraq Gen. Raymond Odierno now says as many

as 20 percent of U.S. troops will remain on urban patrols beyond the June 30 “deadline” to withdraw outside city limits. There are now 134,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, more than before the start of the 2007 “surge.”

The picture emerges, not of U.S. imperialism slowly pulling out of the region, but of Washington prolonging and spreading its multi-theater war in that part of the world, deepening the transformation of its fighting forces simultaneously.

Washington arrogantly declares its intention to continue the war drive, regardless of the damage done to the toilers. But its spreading wars also have unintended consequences. The overthrow by imperialist forces of the Taliban and Baathist governments in Afghanistan and Iraq inadvertently opened up political space for the working class and peasants to organize to advance their interests: for women to fight for their emancipation, for peasants to demand land reform, for oppressed nationalities, like the Kurds in Iraq, to press for self-determination, and for separation of religious institutions from politics and the state.

All over the world we need to continue mobilizing to demand U.S. and coalition forces get out of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan now! The stronger our voices, the more political space can be won by workers and peasants in that war-torn region to advance their interests.

Banks ‘stress test’ serves to cover crisis

Continued from front page

ing these funds must be submitted to federal officials by June 8 and carried out by November 9. The government hopes this will be done through “private infusions” of capital, instead of additional federal bailout funds.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the Federal Reserve’s projections of the big banks’ capital deficits was much larger than \$75 billion but was “significantly scaled back” in the report. Citigroup, for example, which has already been given \$50 billion in government bailout funds, was previously listed as having to raise \$35 billion but the final report lowered that amount to \$5.5 billion.

Though not in the report, the government told the banks they may not have to raise the full \$75 billion “if earnings over the next six months outstrip regulators’ forecasts,” reported the *Financial Times*. This will “increase the incentive for banks to book profits in the next two quarters,” the paper added.

Banks have also been adopting new accounting methods to show higher profits. In April banks were told to use their own judgment of the value of “assets,” instead of depressed market prices. Goldman Sachs, which reported \$1.8 billion in profits

the first quarter of this year, switched from issuing reports from the fiscal year ending November 30 to the calendar year, eliminating December, where the bank lost \$780 million.

Billions of dollars in government bailouts already given to the banks have done little to get them to lend. According to CNN Money, the median change in lending of 21 of these banks declined 2 percent in February compared to the previous month. The new government plan won’t make much of a difference, noted the *Journal* as it “might prompt banks to hoard cash and further curtail lending.”

Among the banks that don’t have to raise additional capital, according to the report, are JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, American Express, and Bank of New York Mellon. Many of these “healthier” banks plan to “reshape the competitive landscape,” noted the *Times*, by repaying the government bailout funds they had received under the Troubled Asset Relief Program.

The “stress test” report doesn’t address the conditions of the 8,000 midsize and smaller banks in the United States, many of which are in poorer shape and have fewer options for raising funds to cover their debts.

Afghanistan protest

Continued from front page

Dawn the marchers wanted to “show our anger at the crimes committed by the American forces. They have killed our innocent people carelessly.” Police fired on the demonstrators, wounding three.

Shopkeepers in Farah, the main city of Farah Province, closed shops, saying they would not reopen until an investigation is carried out to their satisfaction.

Pentagon officials have refused to accept responsibility for the carnage and blamed the Taliban for the civilian deaths. One U.S. statement said the reports were “extremely over-exaggerated.”

A joint U.S.-Afghan team “investigating” the incident released its findings May 9. The team claimed that Taliban fighters forced villagers into houses and then fired on Afghan army and coalition units from those houses, using the civilians “as human shields.”

The report also argued it was impossible to tell how many of the dead were civilians because they had all been buried.

Two Afghans interviewed by the *New York Times* gave descriptions of what they saw that day, sharply contradicting Washington’s version. The two, who are residents of the Shiwan and Granai villages, said the Taliban had engaged Afghan forces and then retreated to the villages, later withdrawing from the area. Bombs were dropped on both villages after the Taliban had left, they said.

Abdul Basir Khan, a member of the province council, said he had collected reports of 147 civilians killed in the raid. If that figure is confirmed it would be the highest number of civilians killed in a single attack since the war began in 2001, according to *Time* magazine.

Abdul Rauf Ahmadi, a police spokesperson for western Afghanistan, said based on reports from local police, the Red Cross, and residents, more than 100 people were killed. “Twenty-five to 30 of them are Taliban,” he said, “and the rest are civilians, including children, women, and elderly people.”

This is not the first time Washington has denied responsibility for killing civilians in Afghanistan. In August 2008 the Afghan government and the United Nations reported that as many as 90 civilians had died in a U.S. missile strike in Herat Province. U.S. officials insisted almost all the dead were Islamist fighters. It was not until October 8, after aerial photos of the scene showing the victims were released, that Washington backed down and admitted to 33 civilian deaths in the attack.

The United Nations reports that the number of civilian deaths in the Afghan war leaped by 40 percent in the last year, to 2,118.

Despite criticism of its war, Washington is escalating it. The war budget submitted by the Pentagon for fiscal 2010 includes \$65 billion for Afghanistan, compared to \$61 billion for Iraq.

U.S. commander replaced

Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced May 11 that he has replaced Gen. David McKiernan, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, with Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the officer credited with directing the teams that captured former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and killed al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

“Defense officials said that General McKiernan was removed because of what they described as a conventional approach to what has become one of the most complicated military challenges in American history,” the *New York Times* said. McChrystal was head of the Pentagon’s Special Operations command from September 2003 to August 2008.

Lt. Gen. David Rodriguez, who headed the 82nd Airborne Division in Afghanistan previously, was named deputy commander. He is currently Gates’s military assistant.

In Afghanistan U.S. engineers and construction workers are working to complete a new U.S. base in Helmand Province, site of some of the sharpest battles with Islamist forces.

U.S. national security advisor Gen. James Jones brusquely dismissed Afghan president Hamid Karzai’s complaints about the civilian deaths from air strikes. The general stated May 10 that “certainly to tie the hands of our commanders and say we’re not going to conduct air strikes . . . would be imprudent.”

LETTERS

Benito Juárez

I really enjoyed Steve Warshell’s article “Benito Juárez, Mexican revolutionary democrat.”

Ali el Amir

New York, New York

Excellent part of my classes

Keep up the excellent work. Your analyses are an excellent part of my classes on violations of human rights, etc.

Asha Samad-Matías

New York, New York

Tony Roberts 1943–2008

This is to inform comrades of the death from cancer of my beloved husband and lifelong socialist, Tony Roberts, some months ago at the age of 64. Older comrades will remember Tony, who received some of his early

political education in the United States with Joe Hansen, who he always considered his political mentor.

Tony was a leading member of the Tendency in the International Marxist Group in the 1970s and also served on the International Committee of the Fourth International, before forming the League for Socialist Action in the United Kingdom.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

Tony was a lifelong supporter of the politics of the American SWP, including its proletarian trajectory, Lenin’s position on the revolution of oppressed nations, and support for the Cuban Revolution. He always read the *Militant* online, even during his very difficult last weeks.

I am sending a donation in Tony’s memory and I would be very pleased to hear from comrades who remember him.

Pauline Roberts

London, England

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.